

Cambridge Commission on the Status of Women

September 13, 2017

Upcoming Events

September 26 (Tuesday) 6:30pm

Screening of *Left on Pearl*, followed by panel discussion

Cambridge Main Library

October 4 (Wednesday) 6pm

Domestic Violence Vigil

Steps of City Hall

October 11 (Wednesday) 6pm

Monthly Women's Commission Meeting

51 Inman St. second floor

October 16 (Monday) 6pm

Women in Cambridge: Meet JJ Gonsen chef/entrepreneur/music promoter

ONCE Somerville Ballroom

Minutes

Attendance: Nadia, Pauline, Marjorie, Therecia, Carol, Jane, Barbara, Pamela, Addie

Introductions

Commissioners updated their contact information for our records. Once complete, contact information will be emailed to entire commission.

Updates

Workplace/Employee Safety

The Women's Commission has been working with various City departments on conducting an Employee Safety needs assessment. The project was sparked by employees having questions about when they could use the emergency ride home program that the city offers. This led to a larger conversation about the safety of employees in the workplace, especially those that may have to work late in empty buildings and those who often interact with the public.

In November, there will be a week's worth of brown bag lunches, in various Cambridge city buildings, to informally have Cambridge employees share their experiences relating to safety in the workplace. The group will collect the experiences to help understand the areas of greatest concern and how they might be addressed.

Mayor Simmons is fully committed to the project and recently submitted a goal for City Council to address workplace safety.

Identity, Relationship, Media Activity Guide

Responding to the requests of youth-serving departments and organizations in the City, the Cambridge Women's Commission developed *Identity, Relationships, and Media Activity Guide for Cambridge's Youth-Serving Programs* to address gender and gender stereotypes through the lens of identity, relationships, and media for middle and high school age youth.

In order to build a more resilient, healthy Cambridge, many of our local youth-serving organizations have taken on the responsibility of meeting the social and emotional needs of youth in their programs, leading them to discuss larger and often difficult social issues that affect their youth: race, gender, sexuality, and abuse. Recognizing that identity is intersectional and complex, the Commission emphasized a holistic approach for each one of the activities. The curriculum also includes a section devoted to gender-focused programs in Cambridge as well as additional resources for youth workers and for youth.

Left on Pearl film screening and panel discussion

The Women's Commission is excited to sponsor this free screening of the award winning documentary *Left on Pearl* on Tuesday, September 26, 2017, 6:30pm at Cambridge Main Library, 449 Broadway

Left on Pearl is a 55-minute documentary about a highly significant but little-known event in the history of the women's liberation movement, the 1971 takeover and occupation of a Harvard University-owned building by hundreds of Boston area women.

The ten-day occupation of 888 Memorial Drive in Cambridge by women demanding a Women's Center and low income housing for the community in which the building stood, embodied within it many of the hopes, triumphs, conflicts and tensions of Second Wave feminism. One of the few such takeovers by women for women, this action was transformative for the participants, and led directly to the establishment of the longest continuously operating Women's Center in the U.S, located now in Cambridge.

Through television news from the time, newspaper headlines, found footage, and extensive interviews with participants and eyewitnesses of varied sexual orientations, racial, class and ethnic backgrounds (including both supporters and opponents of the takeover) *Left on Pearl* provides a riveting and often humorous look at a fascinating historical moment.

Remaining Positive in the Age of Climate Change, follow up

We had an absorbing discussion on climate change, microbes, and the role that marshes play in healthy ecosystems with our September Women+Words speaker, Dr. Jennifer Bowen.

Related, please remember that Cambridge residents have an option to request 100% renewable energy from Eversource. More information at the Cambridge Community Electricity Program:

<http://www.masspowerchoice.com/cambridge>

New Business

Over the past six months, we have experienced a growth in membership as several new members have joined the commission. As a result, October will be devoted to learning more about each other and

discovering deeper ways commissioners can connect around topic areas and issues they are most interested in. We will also go over how commissioners can be directly involved in particular projects of the commission, and explore new avenues for partnership and participation. More information will be forthcoming before the October 11 meeting.